

**What is New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park (NHP)? | New Bedford Whaling NHP was established on November 12, 1996. This 13 block area of the city of New Bedford is one of the newest of the nation’s 376 National Park Service sites and commemorates the history and heritage of New Bedford as the world’s leading whaling port during the 19th century. The park preserves for the benefit and inspiration of the people of the United States certain districts, structures, and artifacts located within the city of New Bedford and associated with the history of whaling and related social and economic themes in America.**

PHOTOS: COLLECTION OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

**What’s a General Management Plan?**

A general management plan is just like a master plan that might be prepared by your own city or town. It lays out a vision for the future of the park and provides guidance for park management and development over the next 10 to 15 years.

**Notes From the Superintendent**

In the time since our first public meeting in May 1997, the planning team has been busy working behind the scenes to collect the information needed to complete this plan. As newcomers to the city of New Bedford, we had to spend time getting to know the city’s rich history, as well as its buildings, landscapes, museum and archival collections, and the many people who contribute to the city’s cultural legacy.

With the help of many local people and institutions, a large amount of research has been undertaken that provides basic information for the plan. Research focused on historic buildings, the historic landscape, collections, and archeology associated with the park.

In November 1997, a Vision, Mission, and Goals workshop was held assembling 75 representatives of local museums and institutions, city offices, and community groups. The results of this workshop appear in this newsletter as well as on the park’s web page ([www.nps.gov/nebe](http://www.nps.gov/nebe)) and form the foundation for the plan.

In the months to come, the planning team will be working with the park’s partners to complete a set of draft management options for the park. One such meeting took place this fall involving a number of local groups who discussed their ideas about interpretive and educational programming. We look forward to making the draft management options available for public comment sometime this winter. Also, as part of that review, we will hold at least one public meeting to discuss the draft management options.

The general management plan is an important document for any park, especially a new one. We appreciate your patience as we take the time needed to assemble this critical document and look forward to your continued participation.

**—John Piltzecker**

**1 | General Management Plan**



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**Learning About New Bedford | The first year of the planning process was spent learning about New Bedford’s history and the build-ings, landscapes, and artifacts that relate to the story of American whaling in New Bedford. In order to plan effectively for the park, the planning team must under-stand the significance and condi-tion of each of these elements. To gather this information, the plan-ning team employed a group of NPS professionals with special expertise in each of these areas. They, in turn, worked with local experts, to develop the series of reports described below:**

**Historic Structures Inventory and Conditions Assessment**—This report provides basic infor-mation regarding the condition and significance of historic buildings associated with the park. The report addresses structures located within the waterfront historic district as well as those named in the legislation (Rotch-Jones-Duff House, Bourne Counting House, & Wharfinger Building). It also includes buildings identified in the recent NPS report on the Underground Railroad (i.e. Nathan Johnson House). The study was undertaken by the NPS Northeast Cultural Resource Center at Lowell.



PHOTO: COLLECTION OF THE NEW BEDFORD WHALING MUSEUM

**Historic Landscape Report**—This report focuses on the waterfront historic district and provides an analysis of historical and existing conditions of the streetscape, including paving materials, street furnishings, signage, and views to the water-front. The report also identifies preservation issues associated with the historic landscape. The Park Service’s Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation undertook this study.

**Collections Overview & Assessment**—This overview and assessment provides basic informa-tion about park-related collections that are held by the city, the Whaling Museum, and other institutions within the city of New Bedford. The study describes the size and content of each collection and provides a basic assessment of its condition. The report also provides a summary of overall collection management and preserva-tion needs. This study was undertaken by the NPS Museum Services Branch in Boston.

**Archeological Overview**—A brief overview is being prepared by the NPS Northeast Cultural Resource Center. The overview identifies areas related to the park that may be archeologically sensitive.

**Vision, Mission and Goals | In November 1997, a workshop was held to define the fundamental direction for park management embodied in the following Vision, Mission, and Goals statements. About 75 representa-tives of local museums, institutions, city offices, and community groups, participated in the intensive one-day session. The results of this work-shop appear below.**

**Draft Vision Statement**

New Bedford was the international capital for whaling in the mid-19th century. This city is the best location to tell the story of American whaling and the human themes that are embraced within it.

**Visitors to New Bedford find . . .**

. . . a fun, exciting, and dynamic place that tells the story of the people and places—both near and far—that played a role in the evolution of whaling. Visitors of all ages and backgrounds enjoy the character of New Bedford’s historic areas and learn more about them through entertaining and enlightening programs and activities; . . . a lively and invigorated working waterfront that is connected to the park and is a tableau for telling the stories of those who chose a life at sea and those who stayed behind; and, . . . a vibrant and inclusive network of people, and cultural and educational institutions that are actively involved in a continuous collaboration to ensure that resources are protected and stories are told so that future generations understand and appreciate the role of whaling and the sea in New Bedford’s past and their connection to it.

**Draft New Bedford Mission Statement**

New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park helps to preserve, protect, and interpret certain districts, structures, and artifacts that are associated with the history of whaling and related social, economic, and environmental themes for the benefit and inspiration of this and future genera-tions. These efforts will be undertaken in partnership with the city of New Bedford, local and regional institutions, and the Inupiat Heritage Center in Barrow, Alaska.

**Draft Mission Goal Statements**

**Mission Goal 1:** Through partnerships with local, regional, and national institutions, orga-nizations, and communities, New Bedford Whaling NHP supports the preservation of the historic landscapes, structures, museum and archival collections, associated with the history of whaling. **Mission Goal 2:** The park contributes to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of historic resources related to the social, economic, and environmental his-tory of whaling and their associated themes and fosters the stewardship of these resources through a network of private and public partners. **Mission Goal 3:** New Bedford Whaling NHP collaborates with a wide range of institutions within the City of New Bedford and beyond to promote the delivery of high quality, comprehensive, interpretive, cultural, and educational programming to the general public. **Mission Goal 4:** At New Bedford Whaling NHP visitors understand the global dimensions of the city’s whaling industry and maritime trades (Past, Present, & Future) including their social, economic, and environmental his-tory, the diversity of cultures associated with the industry, and its relationship to arctic ex-ploration and Native Alaskan cultures. **Mission Goal 5:** Visitor pathways to destinations within the city are safe and easy to navigate. Virtual pathways guide visitors to well designed and developed destinations on the Internet that are easy to find and use. **Mission Goal 6:** The park and its partners achieve these goals in a flexible, cost effective and responsive manner. **Mission Goal 7:** The National Park Service recognizes that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is a source of community identity and pride and that positive, local partici-pation in support of the park will yield success. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park fosters a climate in which community initiatives and collaborations are encouraged.

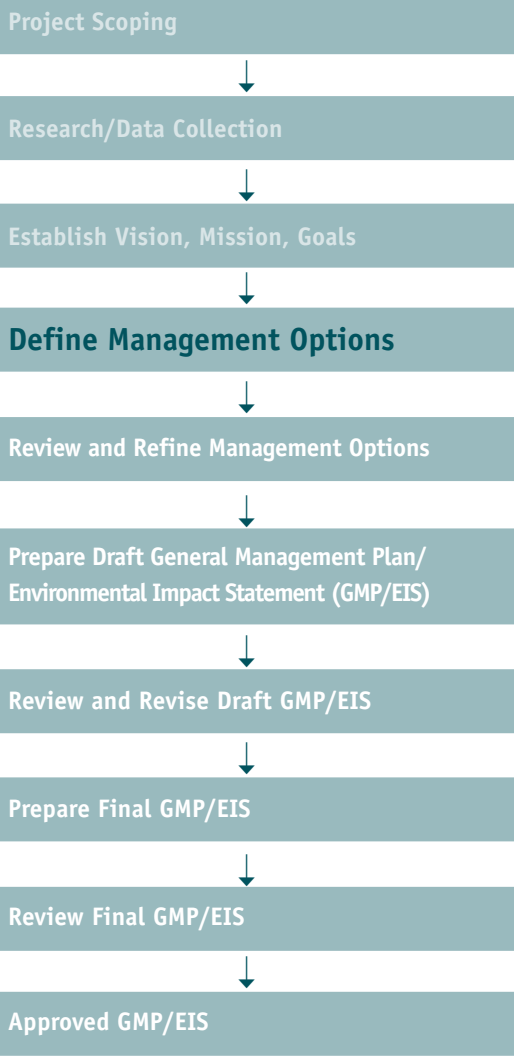
**Barrow, Alaska | Some of you may be surprised to learn that New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park is related to a site in Barrow, Alaska—the Inupiat Heritage Center. Barrow is located at the northernmost point of the North Slope—an area the size of the state of Minnesota—where the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas meet. The Inupiat Heritage Center is a museum and cultural center dedi-cated to the preservation of the language and traditions of the Inupiat people.**



PHOTO: JAMES RANSON

**Why Barrow and the North Slope of Alaska?** During mid to late 19th century, New Bedford’s whalers were travelling progressively further away to hunt whale bringing them through the Bering Strait into the Arctic Ocean. A number of whaling stations were established along the Alaskan coast and many whalers, including those from New Bedford, found themselves wintering in the Arctic waiting for the ice to break in the spring. New Bedford Whaling NHP’s enabling legislation requires that we identify opportuni-ties to link the two sites. In August, 1998, the New Bedford Whaling NHP’s management assistant, Mike Caldwell, traveled to Barrow to begin building a working relationship with the Inupiat Heritage Center.

**Where Are We Now?**



**What is the Next Step? | Over the next several months, the planning team will work with park partners to develop draft management options for the park. The management options will outline different possibilities for visitor programming, exhibits, visitor services (e.g. restrooms, public information), historic preservation, park facilities, and park administra-tion. These management options should be available for public review during winter 1999 in the form of another newsletter.**

**For More Information . . .** Contact Ellen Levin Carlson, Project Manager (617) 223-5048 or write National Park Service, Boston Support Office, 15 State Street, Boston, MA 02109